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ABSTRACT

This article presents a brief summary of research pertaining to the reading interests of elementary school pupils and contains a 48-item bibliography. (Author)

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THE READING INTERESTS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PUPILS: A SUMMARY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

by
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November 1977

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Abstract

This article presents a brief summary of research pertaining to the reading interests of elementary school pupils, and contains a 48-item bibliography.

The Reading Interests of Elementary School

Pupils: A Summary and Bibliography

A review of literature, from 1897 to the present, on pupils' reading interests reveals that the questionnaire is the most widely used method for ascertaining reading interests. Other methods used for determining reading interests include selection ratings and interviews.

The studies of Ramsey (1962), Stanchfield (1962) and Chiu (1973) support the hypothesis that there is no difference between the reading interests of good and poor readers.

There is evidence that primary and intermediate grade pupils have different reading interests. As early as 1898 Wissler wrote about differences in pupils' interests. Generally, primary grade pupils appear to be interested in animals and fairy tales. This was discussed in studies by Witty, Coomer and McBean (1946), Edith and Amatora (1951), Rudman (1955), Wolfson (1960), Ramsey (1962), Stanchfield (1962) and Chiu (1973).

Intermediate grade pupils become more interested in action and adventure stories, sports, science and mysteries. This was highlighted by Garnett (1924), Witty, Coomer and McBean (1946), Edith and Amatora (1951), Rudman (1955), Wolfson (1960), Ramsey (1962), Stanchfield (1962) and Chiu (1973).

Sex differences in reading interests become apparent after the primary grades. Intermediate grade boys prefer sports, adventure, mystery, biographies and science. Girls prefer to read about mysteries, children with familiar experiences, humor, romance and adventure. These sex differences in interests appear in the early reports by Henderson (1897) and Vostrosky (1899). They also appear in later studies by Garnett (1924), Ramsey (1962) and Chiu (1973).

Finally, studies by Emans (1968), and Johns (1973, 1975) indicate that inner city children prefer stories with middle-class settings rather than true-to-life inner-city themes and settings. McCloskey (1967) and

Barchas (1971) found that lower socioeconomic children, in the intermediate grades, preferred adventure, mystery, humor and sports stories. Barchas further discovered that the reading interests of ethnic groups are similar with the exception that each ethnic group preferred characters of its own ethnic background.

For a more detailed review of children's reading interests, the following articles and books may be read:

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